

REMARKS

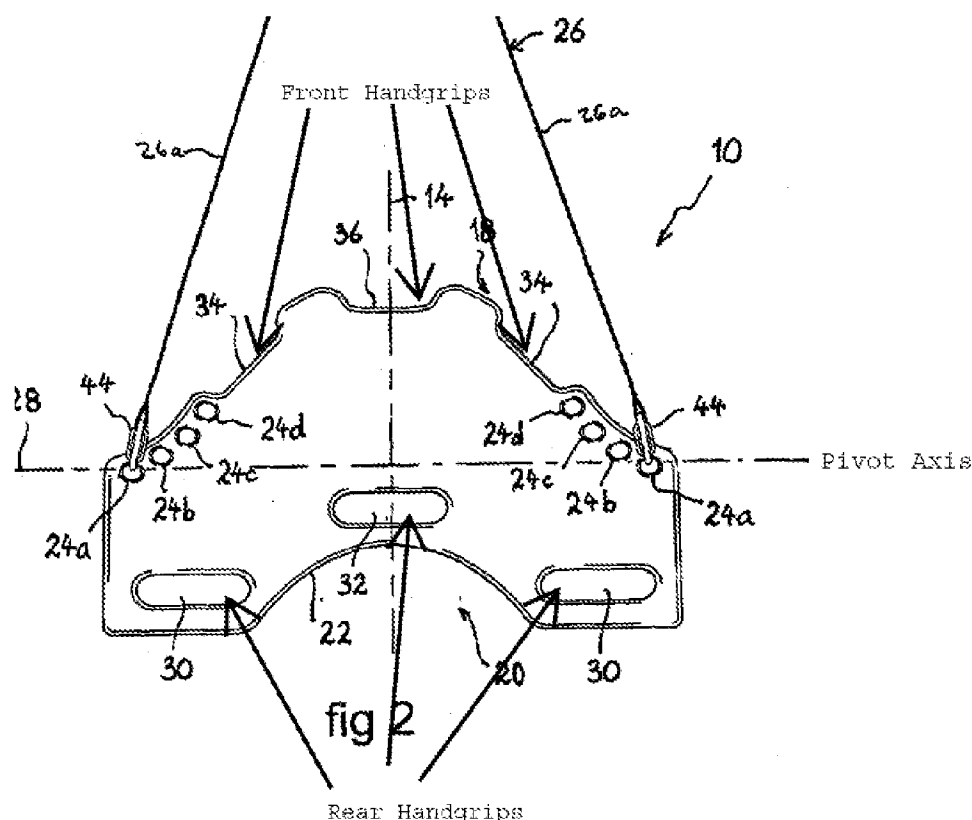
The indication of allowability of dependent claims 18 and 27 is appreciated. It is not necessary to rewrite these claims into independent form at this time, as the independent claims are allowable for the reasons stated below.

The indefiniteness rejection of claims 16 and 17 has been overcome by amendment. As amended, these claims depend on claim 13 which provides antecedent basis for the term “outer fins.”

The rejection of claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11 for obviousness over Irby (USP 5,558,551) in view of Ball (USP 5,482,485) and Arango (USP 5,617,809) is traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, requires six handgrips on a water board, wherein three are rear handgrips and three are front handgrips. The amendments to claim 1 incorporate limitations regarding front handgrips from cancelled claims 9 and 10, which were not subject to this rejection.

The six handgrips are arranged symmetrically about a center axis of the board. The provision of front and rear handgrips are in combination with an apertures for a tow bridle also arranged on the board. The apertures define a pivot axis about which the water board can be pivoted to ride on the surface of the water or dive below the water. Figure 2, presented with annotations below, illustrates the water board with three handgrips forward of the pivot axis and three handgrips aft of the pivot axis:



In the claimed invention, the front and rear handgrips in combination with a pivot axis considerably enhances the maneuverability of the board by allowing a person to change his grip on the board and thereby change the tilt of the board. The pivot axis of the claimed water board allows a rider to controllably tilt the board to improve maneuverability in or under the water (see second paragraph on page 9 of the application). A further feature which enhances the maneuverability of the water board of the present invention is the provision of both front and rear handgrips, including a central handgrip for single-handed operation (see second paragraph on page 7).

The water boards shown in Irby, Ball and Arango do not have the front handgrips. The water boards shown in Irby and Ball have rear handgrips and no front handgrips.

Arango appears to disclose handgrips in the center of the board. However the location of the handgrips is not clearly disclosed, and thus Arango cannot be applied as teaching front handgrips adjacent a leading edge of the board.

Contrary to the Action, the orifices 3 in Arango are not adjacent the front leading edge. The orifices are not handgrips. They are connections for a tow bridle and arranged a center section of the board. Arago, column 2, lines 36 to 37 ("located towards the central zone.").

It would not have been obvious to apply front handgrips to the water boards disclose in Irby, Ball and Arango for at least the reason that these references do not disclose front handgrips. These references disclose rear handgrips and suggest a center handgrip. There is no suggestion apparent from these references that additional handgrips are needed. Specifically, these references do not suggest a center front handgrip and a pair of front handgrips in the wings of a board. Adding handgrips forward of a pivot axis would significantly change the manner in which a rider controls and holds onto the board. Accordingly, adding front handgrips would not have been obvious in view of Irby, Ball and Arango.

The rejection of dependent claims 2, 3, 6, 9, 10 and 13 as being obvious over Irby in view of Ball, Arango and further in view Salvador (USP 5,655,939) is traversed for the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1 on which these claims depend.

Salvadores shows handgrips 7 on a water board having two front handgrips 7, but does not disclose a third front handgrip aligned with the center axis required by claim 1. There are no rear handgrips disclosed in Salvadorés. Irby, Ball, Arango and Salvadorés do not disclose or suggest a center front handgrip and, particularly, a center front handgrip in combination with five other handgrips. There is no reason evident from the prior art to include both front and rear handgrips and a front center handgrip on a water board.

The traction point 4 disclosed in Salvadorés connects to a tow rope. This traction point is not a pair of apertures that define a pivot axis, as required by claim 1. Because there is no pivot axis, the water board disclosed in Salvadorés does not pivot about a pivot axis by a user holding on to the front and/or rear handgrips, as can be done in the claimed invention.

The rejection of dependent claims 14 to 17 as being obvious over Irby, Ball, Arango and Salvadorés and further in view of the tow tube shown in Haller et al (USP 5,819,680) is traversed for the reasons stated above regarding Irby, Ball, Aragon and Savadores.

Claims 14 to 17 are directed to fins, including a center fin, on the underside of the water board. Irby and Arango do not have fins. There is no center fin disclosed in Ball and Salvadorés. The inflatable two craft disclosed in Haller is not a water board. Accordingly, the prior art does not teach a center fin on a water board as recited in claim 14 to 17.

The rejection of independent claim 19 and dependent claims 20 and 22 to 25 as being obviousness over Irby in view of Haller et al and Arango is traversed for the similar reasons as stated above.

As does claim 1, claim 19 defines a water board having six handgrips including three front handgrips and three rear handgrips. Claim 19 requires the front handgrips to be forward of the pivot axis and the rear handgrips to be aft of the pivot axis. Irby, Haller and Arango do not disclose: a water board having front handgrips, a pivot axis that is aft of front handgrips, both front and rear handgrips on the same board, or a board with a center fins. Accordingly, Irby, Haller and Arango would not have rendered the claimed invention to have been obvious.

The rejection of dependent claims 21 and 28 (Cancelled) for obviousness based on Haller, Arango and Salvadores is traversed for the same reasons as stated above. Further, Salvadores does not disclose a center front handgrip and does not have a center section for a front handgrip that is forward of a pivot point.

The rejection of dependent claim 26 as being obvious over Irby, Haller, Arango and Ball is traversed for the reasons stated above for the patentability of claim 20. Further, there is no teaching in these references to make the center fin larger than the outer fins.

The rejection of cancelled claim 29 is moot.

New claim 31 recites six handgrips for a water board, three of which are forward of a pivot axis and three of which are rearward of a pivot axis. These features distinguish the prior art applied to reject the original claims. Further, claim 31 requires leading regions of wings that are swept back with respect to the leading edge of a center section. In contrast to claim 31, the center leading edges shown in Irby, Ball and Salvadores are aft of the leading regions on the wings.

Further, dependent claim 32 requires the distance separating the bridle connections to be greater than the distances separating the front handgrips in the front and rear of the wings. In contrast, the handgrips shown in Arango, Salvadores, Ball and Irby are separated by greater distances than the tow rope connections.

All claims are in good condition for allowance. If any small matter remains outstanding, the Examiner is requested to telephone applicants' attorney. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of this application is requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, in the fee(s) filed, or asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Account No. 14-1140.

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Respectfully submitted,

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